Realistic flight simulation requires that the mind be fooled into forgetting what it knows to be true. You're not on the ground strapped into a metal box, but flying at 6000 feet in unfamiliar airspace and the weather just got very bad.

FOR SOME time the only certified simulators affordable to general training schools have been limited to visual and audio stimuli. Although offering valuable training experiences, these are one key step removed from the sort of authentic experience that really can stick the mind. That missing step has been motion – an opportunity addressed by USA company, Redbird Flight Simulations.

Available in New Zealand
Redbird Flight Simulations was founded in 2006 by a team of computer industry executives and engineers from Texas. All are aviation enthusiasts who set themselves the goal of creating a realistic simulator training environment that was within the financial reach of any flying school. Their products are now being operated around the world, including at Cesna pilot centres in the USA.

Ardmore based Executive Flight Services have recently obtained the Redbird Flight Simulations agency for Australasia after owner Mike Foster met with the company while researching flight simulators at Oshkosh.

The Redbird is a first of type for Australasia, arriving with its FAA approval certificate as an Advanced Aviation Training Device just before Christmas. Early in the process Mike spoke with NZCAA who offered support but no promises as to when or what form of NZ certification might be available. Any concerns in that regard proved to be unfounded when in the space of one day, CAA gave approval for all of the training dispensations sought (see sidebar to this article). This gives a good indication as to the quality of operation on offer.

The first training company to use the Redbird is Eagle Flight Training at Ardmore. The simulator is available for hire to Pilots and Flight Training Organisations with approved Instructors.

The Redbird simulator provides for smooth landing training. Mike says “there’s a lot to be said for motion – the difference in student learning is immediately evident”. Redbird does make fixed as well as motion base simulators, though it is only the full motion base (FMX) version that Mike is now operating from premises within the Dennis Thompson hangar complex at Ardmore.

Ardmore

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Aircraft Options
Redbird have done an excellent job of containing costs in their products, in part by using Microsoft visuals and their own interchangeable instrument panels designed to realistically simulate Garmin and other industry standard avionics.

Aircraft and panel configurations can be swapped in about 5 minutes making a non issue out of having consecutive students training in different aircraft. Three configurations are currently available on the simulator at Ardmore including:

- Cesna 172 with G1000 panel
- Cesna 172 with Garmin 430, 530, ADF, DMF, a Beech Baron with Garmin 430, 530 and auto pilot. On the way is a custom panel to match Eagle Flight Training’s Beechcraft Duchess with Aspen PFD, standard instruments and King GPS.

Other aircraft can be set up for US$5000 within a 6 month period.

Flight Operations
A clever feature of the simulator is that each pilot has their own keys. The key is actually a USB memory stick that contains their flight history, with software that enables this to be re-run on any computer. Administrators can easily manage pilot records and can add missions and scenarios custom tailored to pilot.

Instructors control each simulation via a tablet PC which can be operated from inside or outside the simulator. (In the USA, one instructor might control up to three simulations concurrently). From their controlling PC, the instructor can make changes to the weather, fail aircraft components, and generally make any adjustments they wish in order to enhance the training experience.

The simulator is rated for two persons on the inside at any one time so in the case of multi crew flights, the instructor will remain outside and watch the flight from the open door at the back of the simulator.

Available for hire to Pilots and Flight Training Organisations with approved Instructors.

Contact Mike Foster at Executive Flight Services for more information on the Redbird or for a demonstration at Ardmore.

Phone: 09 268 6641 or 021 321 417.
Email: info@eftl.co.nz
www.eftl.co.nz

Visit Eagle Flight Training at the Redbird Stand - PilotExpo Stand 23

Redbird
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Executive Flight Services are the Australasian Distributors for Redbird Flight Simulations Inc. Engage to cockpit purchases are also welcome.

EXECUTIVE FLIGHT SERVICES

Air Transport
Charter Flights

We can provide a number of Air Transport, Fixed Wing and Helicopter services into most New Zealand airports.

Contact Mike Foster
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Redbird SD 1000
Specific approvals for aeroplane training under Parts 61 and 141
(a) 2 hours instrument ground time towards issue of PPL
(b) 5 hours instrument ground time towards issue of CPL
(c) 5 hours instrument ground time towards issue of Cat C or B Instructor Rating
(d) 20 hours instrument ground time towards issue of Instrument Rating
(e) 2 hours instrument ground time towards currency of Instrument Rating
(f) One GNSS, NDB, VOR, LLZ or ILS approach procedure towards currency of Instrument Rating
(g) One GNSS, NDB, VOR, LLZ (non-precision) or ILS (precision) approach procedure towards currency of Instrument Rating
(h) Conduct of cross country portion and any one approach of every alternate Instrument Rating annual competency demonstration
(i) Demonstration of Garmin 430/530/1000 GNSS as a subsequent type and model